

MALE PARTICIPATION IN MATERNAL AND CHILD CARE IN RURAL AREAS OF TIRUNELVELI, TAMILNADU - A COMMUNITY BASED CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY – 2017

ABSTRACT

Introduction and Justification:

Most of the maternal deaths occur during delivery and immediate post partum period. This can be avoided by reducing three delays during emergency namely delay in seeking, reaching and receiving health care. Males, most often being the decision makers, can reduce these delays and thereby bring about better pregnancy outcomes by involving themselves actively in the maternal care. Hence, this study aims to assess the participation of males in maternal and child health care among the rural population in Tirunelveli district, Tamilnadu.

Objectives

To determine the male participation in birth preparedness and in the different aspects of antenatal, intranatal and postnatal care in rural population and to assess the various factors influencing the male participation in maternal and child health care.

Methodology

This was a cross sectional study done in the villages in Tirunelveli district between January 2017 to July 2018. A sample of 242 married men whose wives had given birth to a child in the past one year, were selected by two stage sampling. Data were collected using an interview based questionnaire. The data were entered in MS Excel version 2007 and analyzed in SPSS Version 16 using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

The mean ages of the participants and their wives were 31.42 and 26.09 years respectively. In this study, 92.6% of the pregnancies were planned and 61.2% had their first pregnancy.

The birth preparedness was good among 51.2 % of the males with majority (76%) deciding on place of delivery. 88% had provided assistance to their wives during the antenatal period where as 93.4% and 81.8% of the participants assisted during intranatal and postnatal period respectively. 86% of the husbands have escorted their wives to hospital for antenatal checkup while 76.4% and 60% escorted during delivery and postnatal checkup respectively. 60.3% accompanied their newborn for immunization. The factors statistically associated with the male participation were education, employment status and parity of wives, occupation of participants, type of family and marriage, planned pregnancy, order of pregnancy and place of delivery. The reasons quoted by the males for lesser participation were work constraints, not allowing them inside health care facility, hesitancy as pregnancy is considered to be a female issue and lack of knowledge.

Conclusion

The involvement in maternal care among the males is fairly good. Health system, cultural practices and work constraints are the predominant factors affecting the male participation in maternal and child care.

Keywords

Birth preparedness, Maternal care, Male participation.